

They hoped that men of all races would be less hotheaded if they were deprived of alcohol and the meeting places. The board also authorized the hiring of an additional 100 special policemen for election day.¹³ Many accounts of preelection violence included explanations that the participants were drunk when tempers flared. On October 12, for example, an armed group of white men adjourned to a bar after a WGU meeting. Freshly renewed with white supremacy rhetoric and alcohol, they left Steljes' saloon on Sixth and Castle Streets and encountered a group of blacks. A fight broke out between two men and escalated until the white men began firing into the crowd of black men who quickly retreated.¹⁴

Wilmington's African American community watched the growing hatred of their race with trepidation while still working to make a place in the city.¹⁵ Some of the city's black leaders attempted to pre-

empt the campaign in September when they requested that Sheriff George Z. French dismiss four of his black deputies as "incompetent."¹⁶ Instead of removing fodder for the Democratic press, these men provided yet another headline in which their move was called a "Political Dodge" that "will not deceive Democrats." The *Morning Star* claimed that the action was less a move by the city's African American leaders and more an action dictated by Russell, Marion Butler, and candidate Oliver Dockery. The paper declared that the dismissals demonstrated Republican "weakness" and they would "only serve to make the Democrats more aggressive in their fight for freedom."¹⁷

Some of the city's blacks unintentionally helped the Democratic Party press. The prime example was Manly, but others such as Frank Thompson and Carter Peamon reacted to Democratic prodding, providing fodder for the Democratic press as it preached the dangers of "negro domination." During preelection voter registration in October, African American Republican leader Carter Peamon withstood threats and registered to vote in the First Ward. In response to Peamon's bravery, white intimidation increased at the registration spot and resulted in Peamon seizing a knife from S. Hill Terry. As Peamon grabbed the knife, he stated that he would like to "slap the jaws of every white man."¹⁸

¹³ "Be it ordained by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Wilmington NC and it is hereby ordained by the authority of the same that it shall be unlawful for any person or persons to sell or give away in the city of Wilmington, or within one mile of same, any whiskey, wine, beer, ale or brandy or other intoxicating drinks between the hours of 11:30 o'clock pm Saturday November 5th 1898 and November 10th at 6 o'clock am. Any person convicted of violating this ordinance shall be fined not exceeding Fifty Dollars or imprisoned not exceeding thirty days. Ratified and unanimously adopted this 5th day of November 1898 at 1 pm." Minutes of the Wilmington Board of Aldermen, State Archives, North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh.

¹⁴ McDuffie, "Politics in Wilmington," 627-8; *Wilmington Messenger*, October 13, 1898.

¹⁵ Some historians have posited that the response of African Americans in Wilmington, and statewide, to the Democratic campaign would have been more organized and vocal had many of the state's leading blacks not been recruited into the ranks of the 3rd Regiment for the Spanish American war. Those men were not allowed to be mustered out until 1899 whereas men in the 1st and 2nd Regiments were home on furlough in time for the election and the violence of November 10.

¹⁶ A group of black leaders—John E. Taylor, Carter Peamon, William A. Moore, John H. Brown, and J. W. Lee—requested the dismissals. *Wilmington Messenger*, September 21, 1898; McDuffie, "Politics in Wilmington," 614.

¹⁷ The black men removed were Sergeant Green, Joe Anderson, Joe Sharp, F.P. Toomer, George Bell, and David Bryant. The men were replaced by whites: J. J. King, G. M. Tenner, C. A. Bordeau, A. Lockamy, Alex Wells, and J. L. Bowers. *Morning Star*, (Wilmington), October 20, 1898.

¹⁸ S. Hill Terry figured prominently on the day of the riot since his home was used as a landmark for the